

Section D

ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION

This guide was prepared by the Office of Internal Affairs to assist supervisors investigating complaints of misconduct. However, there are differences in each complaint, investigation and employee which prohibits a strict protocol. Therefore, this guide serves only as a source of direction.

In all cases, however, the investigating supervisor must be unbiased and objective. Having an open mind, a desire to seek only the truth, the ability to ask the "tough" questions and the perseverance to answer all of the questions are some attributes you must possess to successfully investigate an incident. An incomplete investigation is not only a disservice to the community and the Department, but it can disassociate the employee who will no longer have any trust or faith in the system.

Your opinion of the lack of seriousness of the investigation will often be completely opposite to the employee's concern. Some employees will dwell upon a complaint to the point that it will affect performance. The Department has set goals for the timeliness of completing the investigation. It is incumbent upon you to meet those time demands without sacrificing or compromising your investigation.

Many supervisors are unfamiliar with the administrative system and they can jeopardize the Department's ability to resolve an investigation through a careless approach. If you have any questions about any administrative issue that is not addressed in this text contact the Office of Internal Affairs.

Remember, the burden of proof in an administrative investigation is a **preponderance** of the evidence and not beyond a reasonable doubt as in a criminal case.

PREPARATION

The first step in any complaint investigation is to evaluate the complaint. There are several issues to consider:

- Determine the issues to be addressed.
- Motive of the complainant.
- What evidence exists?
- What is the time required to complete the investigation?

ORGANIZING THE INVESTIGATION

Once you have an initial understanding of the complaint, it is time to organize your investigation. By outlining some brief steps, you will have an investigative path to follow. Some of the steps are:

- Review the complaint. Contact the accepting supervisor if the complaint is not clear.
- What are the specific allegations? Is there criminal conduct?
- Verify the existence of the policy or rule in question.
- Review the associated police investigation and related documents such as the communications printout.
- Identify any discrepancies in the complaint and the reports.
- Analyze the evidence, lack of evidence or seek evidence that was not secured.
- Who should be questioned and in what priority?
- What questions should be asked?
- Who are the witnesses, where are they and are they available? Do they have any motive?
- Visit the scene. All too often witness statements are taken without the investigator having any knowledge of obstructions or surroundings. Was weather or lighting a factor? Consider photographs of the scene if none were taken.
- Prepare a photo line-up if the identity of the employee is unknown.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEWS

The most important and often the most under prepared part of the investigation is the interview.

It is also the most time consuming. Never schedule yourself to have to end an interview. You should be mentally prepared to remain in the interview at least twice as long as you think it will take.

Before you interview anyone involved in the complaint, you must be thoroughly prepared. That means that you have a thorough understanding of the complaint, have an above average knowledge of administrative procedures, specifically the Peace Officer's Bill of Rights, and have reviewed the questions that you have outlined. By outlining the questions that pertain to the complaint, you will not be as likely to forget an issue if the involved employee turns the interview in a completely unforeseen direction.

Know the history of the complainant, the witnesses, involved employees and the accused employee. While this does not diminish their credibility, it can assist you in determining motive and provide a direction and method to be used during the interview.

Remember that the interview can be stressful for an employee or a witness and having to reschedule subsequent interviews because you overlooked an issue or were unprepared is unprofessional.

Generally, the proper sequence for interviewing is:

- Complainant.
- Civilian witnesses.
- Other agency employees.
- Other involved agency employees.
- The accused employee.

WITNESSES AND COMPLAINANTS

Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that all witnesses to the incident and allegation are located and interviewed. It is also equally important to rule out persons who may come forward later and purport themselves to be witnesses.

Some sources for witnesses are:

- The complainant. If arrested, the associates.
- Police reports, communications records and audio tapes.

- Canvassing the area. Include any associated but unrelated areas in the canvass. Examine booking logs, hospital rosters or duty rosters for personnel who may have been in the area but who have not come forward.
- Security video tapes.

Document all your successful or unsuccessful attempts to locate and contact any witnesses.

Research all the witnesses. Not only is this helpful in planning an approach, but it can give you an indication for any possible motives.

At the very least, you should examine:

- Criminal and driving records. Since the investigation is administrative, it excludes any CII inquiry.
- Relationship to the complainant or other witnesses.
- Relationship to the employee.
- Medical or psychological history if appropriate.

Obtain photographs of witnesses and the complainant if the investigation is complex and involved and identification is essential. Drivers' license photos are the best source, however, booking photos can be used with due caution not to prejudice the viewer.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

As stated, the interview is the most essential part of the administrative investigation. Results from the interview are indicative of the skill, professionalism and preparation of the investigator. It can also be a reflection of the investigator's biased, slanted and opinionated orientation.

There are two keys to remember - civilian witnesses are unaware of the skills and techniques of a trained investigator and knowledgeable agency employees can be compelled to give complete and truthful statements.

The interview is too important to "wing it" without a plan. First, you must determine the objectives of the interview. Obviously, it is to get the facts of the allegation. Second, you must standardize your questions to address the following factors:

- The specific details of each allegation.
- Identify each person involved and their specific role or degree of participation.
- Resolve any inconsistencies, discrepancies or conflicts with statements and physical evidence.
- Uncover underlying motives or reasons for filing the complaint, not being truthful, or backing away from full cooperation with the investigation.

By preparing a list of standard questions to ask each person, you can avoid the issue of not being fair and objective.

Normally interviews can be conducted by one person. This is particularly true if the interview is taped. However, there are some instances when a second investigator should be involved:

- As a monitor for a criminal interview.
- Politically sensitive or potentially explosive interviews.
- In matters involving sexual improprieties, minor children or domestic violence.

Remember, if more than one investigator is present during an interview, one must be the lead with the roles clearly defined prior to entering the room.

Schedule the witness interviews at a time and place similar with the allegation. If the violation is occurring at the same time as the complaint, an immediate unscheduled interview would be necessary. However, most can be scheduled in advance and should be conducted in person.

Tape record all interviews, including those conducted by telephone or videotape. Avoid any unexplained breaks, identify all persons present, identify normal breaks and avoid off recording conversations.

Each employee is entitled to a representative during the interview. The role of the representative is to be an observer and an advocate. Representatives or attorneys should not be allowed to answer the "tough" questions for the employee. To limit their active involvement your questions should avoid the following:

- Questions that are compounded or confusing.
- Questions which may constitute an unwarranted intrusion into the employee's right of privacy such as medical records or tax returns.
- Questions which do not pertain directly, or sometimes even indirectly, to the allegations which are the subject of the interrogation.
- Questions which may intrude into privileged areas such as conversations the employee may have had with his/her spouse, counselor, clergyman, attorney, therapist or the employee's representative.
- Questions which would tend to mislead the employee by misrepresenting prior facts or circumstances, or statements of other persons or prior statements by the employee.
- Questions which are argumentative.
- Questions which call for guesswork, surmise or conjecture on the part of the employee.

INTERVIEW FORMAT

All administrative interviews shall use the following introductory format:

- Date, time and location of the interview.
- Note that the interview is being recorded.
- Who is conducting the interview and his/ her current assignment.
- Persons present during the interview.
- Purpose of the interview.
- Nature of the investigation.
- That the employee is ordered to answer questions truthfully, honestly and completely.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

General

- Identify any physiological or psychological limitations on the witnesses' ability to perceive events or give a reasonable statement.
- At the beginning of the interview, allow witnesses to explain the entire incident in their own words without interruption. You can revisit specific areas in conjunction with your preplanned questions.
- It's very difficult to describe or capture physical actions on a tape. If witnesses are describing an area or location, they should use a sheet of paper. If they are describing a physical hold, position of other witnesses or actions of any involved participant, consider videotaping the interview.
- You must ask the right question to get the right answer. They must be specific and direct. Do not ask general questions for specific allegations.
- Interviews are not always congenial as the person may be extremely emotional. They may be uncomfortable with being with a member of the agency against whom they are making a complaint. If there is conflict, consider rescheduling the interview, recap the statement as a method for a break or break to allow the person to regain their composure.
- Make note of body language, pauses, looking from side to side or other indicators.
- At the conclusion, ask the interviewee if they have any additional information or questions that were not covered.

Some Common Pitfalls

- Leading questions.
- Failure to verify answers.
- Refreshing a witness' memory.
- Badgering the interviewee.

- Failure to tape record every witness.
- Calling a person a liar.
- Engaging in a confrontation with the witness or employee.
- Helping a witness to speedup an interview.
- Failure to reenact the alleged misconduct with each witness at the scene.

THE INTERVIEW

Complainant

Interviewing the complainant is not any different from interviewing any other person involved in the investigation. Read the complainant's statement to him and ensure that it is accurate and complete. Conduct your interview using the questions you have developed as a road map.

Before concluding the interview, request the following if they are warranted and have not already been obtained:

- Photographs of the alleged injury whether or not any is visible.
- Medical release.
- Additional witnesses.
- Reason for any significant time delay in making any complaint.
- Availability for follow-up.

Agency employees who are not accused.

When employees who are not being accused of misconduct are being interviewed, the ground rules and procedures are the same as any witness. Agency employees, however, should be allowed to review their own reports prepared in conjunction with the incident giving rise to the allegation. These employees do not have the same rights as accused employees in regard to disclosure of investigative materials. They should be reminded of their obligation to fully and truthfully respond to questioning and that their failure to do so could be deemed insubordination and result in administrative discipline.

If the employee being interviewed makes a self-incriminating statement regarding a criminal offense or a statement which may lead to disciplinary action, the interview should be terminated. The employee should be advised why the interview is being stopped and advised of possible further actions. At this time the investigator should follow the guidelines for an accused employee.

At the conclusion, the investigator must inform the employee that the interview is confidential and admonish the employee not to discuss the interview with anyone except a representative or attorney if appropriate.

If the employee is believed to have given a false or a deliberately misleading statement during the interview to obstruct the administrative investigation, a new internal investigation should be initiated. This can normally be eliminated or minimized through skillful interview techniques and challenging obviously evasive and avoidance methods. You must confront employees with obvious discrepancies or contradictions.

Accused Employee

This interview is the most critical. It should be the last interview of the investigation and should be designed to answer or respond to all of the allegations. It is important that you limit the necessity to conduct any follow-up interviews with the accused employee which is often interpreted as intimidating or harassing.

By this time in the investigation you should be familiar with the accused employee's personnel file, reputation, assignment history, training or qualification records if appropriate and prior discipline. You must be familiar with the employee's contractual, statutory and constitutional rights. There is no excuse for testifying later at arbitration that you did not know what *LYBARGER* means.

You should notify the employee of your intention to interview him/her, the allegation and a time and place for the interview. If the employee requests representation, the interview should be scheduled to accommodate that request. However, serious allegations may require that the employee be interviewed as soon as practical and not as a matter of mutual convenience.

INVESTIGATION BIFURCATION - CRIMINAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE

If the complaint is both an allegation that the Department rules were violated and an allegation of criminal conduct, the investigation must be bifurcated. The underlying facts in each case must be evaluated to determine the procedure to follow and for purposes of making a decision on the use of an administrative

investigation or criminal investigation or both.

Cases involving allegations of criminal misconduct will first be investigated by Investigations. Internal Affairs will monitor these investigations and obtain copies of all criminal reports.

Criminal investigations will always have priority over administrative investigations. Once the criminal investigation is completed, it will be incorporated into the administrative investigation.

The goal of the criminal investigation is the prosecution of appropriate cases on behalf of the People. The goal of the administrative investigation is to determine whether a department rule has been violated and whether the employee committed the violation.

ELEMENTS

Administrative

No right to silence

IA investigation

Confidential
pursuant to PC 832.7

Department disciplines

Right to criminal report

Criminal

Right to silence

Criminal investigation

May not be confidential

DA may prosecute

No right to administrative
investigation or report

LYBARGER AND MIRANDA

Most, if not all, of the investigations that you will conduct will not require a *MIRANDA* admonishment. Those Category 1 investigations are normally conducted by Internal Affairs in conjunction with a Detective from General Investigations. However, if you are assigned an investigation which may be construed as a potential criminal allegation, you should proceed cautiously when it comes to admonishing an accused employee of his/her rights. However, police employees are very familiar with these admonishments and will probably demand both *MIRANDA* and *LYBARGER*. Therefore, prior to conducting any interview with an accused employee, the investigator must be sure of the direction of the investigation.

If the decision has been made by the Chief's Office or the Office of Internal Affairs to investigate the allegation as administrative, the investigator will admonish the employee of both *MIRANDA* and *LYBARGER* rights from the form. This should be done on tape and the employee asked to sign the form and verbally acknowledge his/her rights. The form will become part of the permanent package.

If the employee refuses to cooperate during the interview after being advised of the *LYBARGER* admonishment, he/she should be reminded of their obligation to fully and truthfully respond to questioning and that their failure to do so could be deemed insubordination and result in administrative discipline. If the employee continues to refuse to cooperate, you should request that the employee's commanding officer admonish him/her.

Remember, if the employee is compelled to give a statement, the criminal investigator shall not be present during the interview nor can he/she become aware of any information obtained during the interview.

If you are assigned to investigate only a criminal allegation, you should proceed as you would with any other criminal investigation dependent upon the response to *MIRANDA*.

If you are assigned to investigate only a violation of Department policy or procedure, you may *LYBARGER* the employee if he/she declines to respond during the interview.

The admonition of rights and the appropriate time to do so cause the most confusion for supervisors and investigators. That is why it is important to have preplanned your interview. You can be sure that if the employee is accompanied by an attorney or representative, they will demand both *MIRANDA* and *LYBARGER*. However, you should not automatically shield the employee by *LYBARGER* if he/she waives *MIRANDA* or declines to respond. If you have any doubt, you should seek advice from a superior or the Office of Internal Affairs.

REVIEW OF PROCEDURAL BILL OF RIGHTS

When does it apply?

- Applies to a public safety officer who is under investigation and subjected to interrogation by his/her supervisor, or any other employee of the public safety department.
- Does not apply to any interrogation of an officer in the normal course of duty, counseling, instruction, or informal verbal admonishment by, or other routine or unplanned contact with a supervisor or any other

employee of the public safety department, nor shall this apply to any investigation concerned solely and directly with alleged criminal activities.

Interrogation shall be conducted under the following conditions if it could lead to punitive action:

- Punitive action is defined as any action which may lead to dismissal, demotion, suspension, reduction in salary, written reprimand, or transfer for purposes of punishment.
- Interrogation shall be conducted at a reasonable hour, preferably at a time when the officer is on duty, or during the normal waking hours for the officer, unless the seriousness of the investigation requires otherwise.
- If the interrogation does occur during off duty time, the officer shall be compensated and the officer shall not be released from employment for any work missed.
- The officer under investigation shall be informed prior to such interrogation of the name, rank and command of the officer in charge of the interrogation, the interrogating officers, and all other persons to be present during the interrogation.
- All questions directed to the officer shall be asked by and through no more than two interrogators at one time.
- The officer under investigation shall be informed of the nature of the investigation prior to any interrogation.
- The interrogating session shall be for a reasonable period taking into consideration gravity and complexity of the issue being investigated.
- The officer under interrogation shall be allowed to attend to his/her own personal physical necessities.
- The officer under investigation shall not be subjected to offensive language or threatened with punitive action, except that an officer refusing to respond to questions or submit to interrogations shall be informed that failure to answer questions directly related to the investigation or interrogation may result in punitive action.

- No officer shall be lent or temporarily reassigned to a location or duty assignment if a sworn member of his/her department would not normally be sent to that location or would not normally be given that duty assignment under similar circumstances.
- No promise or reward will be made as an inducement to answering any questions.
- The employer shall not cause the officer under interrogation to be subjected to visits by the press or news media without his/her express consent nor shall his/her home address or photograph be given to the press or news media without his/her express consent.
- The complete interrogation of an officer may be recorded. If a tape recording is made of the interrogation, the officer shall have access to the tape if any further proceedings are contemplated or prior to any further interrogation at a subsequent time. The officer being interrogated shall have the right to bring his/her own recording device and record any and all aspects of the interrogation.
- The officer shall be entitled to any transcribed copy of any notes made by a stenographer or to any reports or complaints made by investigators or other persons, except those which are deemed confidential. No notes or reports which are deemed confidential may be entered into the officer's personnel file.
- If prior to or during the interrogation of an officer it is deemed that he/she may be charged with a criminal offense, he/she shall be immediately informed of his/her constitutional rights.

When can the officer have a representative?

- Upon the filing of a formal written statement of charges, or whenever an interrogation focuses on matters which are likely to result in punitive action against an officer.
- The officer, at his/her request, shall have the right to be represented by a representative of his/her choice who may be present at all times during such interrogation.

Representative

- Shall not be a person subject to the same investigation.

- Shall not be required to disclose, nor be subject to any punitive action for refusing to disclose, any information received from the officer under investigation for noncriminal matters.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Internal Affairs for guidance at any time during your investigation. Most, if not all of your questions, have already been asked and answered during prior investigations. If the information is not available, we will contact the City Attorney's office for direction. Never move forward if you are not sure what you are doing. Remember, it is your responsibility to know, and with all the resources available day or night, there is no excuse for not doing it right. The citizen expects it, the Department demands it and the employee respects it.

Investigative Report Format

A Riverside Police Department Complaint Control Form shall be completed and a personnel complaint (PC) or internal investigation (PA) file number obtained from Communications. A copy of the Complaint Control Form is attached.

The investigation shall use the Internal Affairs Investigation format. A copy of the Internal Affairs investigation format is attached. Also attached is a copy of the Riverside Police Department Employee Admonishment of Rights form. This form includes the Riverside Police Department Grant of Immunity (Lybarger) admonishment.

Upon completion, a Mandatory Report Routing form shall be completed and the investigation routed through the Chain of Command.

Sources:

Internal Affairs Manual - CPOA
Skelly - Discipline and Due Process Manual - CPOA
Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act